

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A franking system comprising a network controller and protocol stack software that allows the franking system to be connected to a local area network and communicate to any other system coupled to the local area network.
2. The franking system of claim 1 wherein the network controller is adapted to allow a peer system to be coupled to an internet connector through a gateway to the internet.
3. The franking system of claim 1 wherein the network controller is adapted to use a communication protocol to a peer system that includes any protocol on top of the network controller protocol stack including the protocol utilized with a system web browser.
4. The franking system of claim 1 further including one or more universal resource locators ("URLs") for identifying one or more servers that can be contacted by the system.
5. The franking system of claim 4 wherein the network controller further includes a web browser for accessing nodes on the internet with a URL.
6. A franking system comprising a network controller and protocol stack software for coupling the franking system to a first LAN to a system connected to the internet by a second LAN.

7. A franking system of claim 6 further including a universal serial bus ("USB") master or slave for coupling the system to a display, modem, keyboard and other franking system peripherals including a LAN node.
8. The franking system of claim 1 wherein the network controller is adapted to couple the franking machine to a wireless network.
9. A franking system of claim 8 wherein the wireless network is a BluetoothTM wireless network device.
10. A franking system of claim 1 wherein the network controller is further adapted to couple the franking system to a wide area network ("WAN").
11. The franking system of claim 10 wherein the WAN is an ISDN network.
12. The franking system of claim 10 wherein the WAN is a SONET network.
13. The franking system of claim 10 wherein the WAN is a Satellite network.
14. The franking system of claim 10 wherein the WAN is an ISDN network.
15. The franking system of claim 1 wherein a WEB browser uses the protocol stack and the network node to access an intranet web server via the internet.

16. A franking system comprising a franking system including modules coupled in series within a configuration authorized by the vendor and including a node controller and protocol stack software for coupling the franking machine to a LAN.

17. The franking system of claim 16 further including a configuration server coupled to the LAN and including a data storage device including data identifying a vendor authorized configuration for the franking modules.

18. The franking system of claim 16 further including a statistical server coupled to the LAN and including a data storage device including franking rates of post office and commercial couriers.

19. The franking system according to claim 1 wherein the system is adapted to download funds via the local area network and an Internet connector from a secure funds server.

20. The franking system according to claim 1 wherein the system is adapted to be remotely controlled via the local area network by a remote system.